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Mistrial Called In Firebomb Death of Negro

HATTIESBURG, Miss., Nov. 15 (AP)—Circuit Judge Stanton Hall has declared a mistrial in the murder trial of James F. Lyons, 35, of Laurel, charged in the firebomb death of a Negro leader.

The judge acted Thursday night after the jury reported itself hopelessly deadlocked after more than four hours deliberation. The jury's vote was reported as 6-to-6.

Lyons was accused in the January 1966 slaying of Vernon Dahmer, a businessman whose home and store near Hattiesburg were firebombed in what the state called a plot by the White Knights of Ku Klux Klan.

The state's chief witness in the Lyons trial—as in six previous trials in the case—was Billy Roy Pitts, a former Klansman. Pitts testified that Lyons took part in planning the raid.

Pitts has been sentenced to life in prison for his part in the raid. He pleaded guilty to both murder and arson.